American Mission Seminary Batticotta Jaffna Ceylon April 29th 1841

My dear Benefactors,

I am gratified very much with a letter from you dated Nov. 28. 1839. I from time to time was with an expectation to receive letters from your generous hands. So while I am with such an expectation, your kind note reached my hands. I cannot express the joy which I had in that time. I don't know whether my note dated 23rd Aug. 1839, accompanied by a Map of Jaffna, reached your hands or not.

As you know clearly, I am a boy who was born among heathen parents who worshiped dumb idols and brought to the Mission Boarding school at Tillipally and then by the aid of my kind Missionaries admitted into this Seminary and finished my regular course of study on September 18. I, in connexion with three other members studying medicine under Dr. Ward one of the Professors of the institution. We four connected with the "Senior Department or Select Class." This select class has lately been formed. It is composed of students, selected from those who have gone thro' the regular course of study in the Seminary. The present number is eight, taken from the class that left the Seminary in 1839 and 1840. They are to pursue, so far as the institution posses the means such studies as are thought best calculated to fit them for the respective stations they are hereafter to occupy. The term of study at present contemplated is three years. Two of them are pursuing for Theological; two for Mathematical; four for medical departments.

The studies pursued by this class in common are English literature and a Biblical course. In the latter are included Evidences of the Divine authority of the Pentateuch; The Book of Genesis, with its Historical and Mythological connections; Biblical Chronology; Hebrew commonwealth; the Doctrine, &c, of Sacrifices; connexion between the old and new Testament and of their respective books; View of the Doctrines and Morality of the Bible, compared with Hinduism, prophecy; Miracles.

The Seminary consists of about 200 members, who are divided into 5 classes. Each class is under the immediate care of a Superintendent Rev. H. B. Hoisington who is now making a tour to America for his health is the Principal; H. Ward Esq. M.D. and Rev. E. Lope are Professors. All the class are examined at the close of the first term. This examination is before the

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Seminary committee and occupies three days. At the close of the second term a public examination in Tamil of one day takes place. At the end of the 3rd term a general examination takes place. This is of three days continuance, the last of which is public, being the annual English Exhibition, on the last day of the term. The Seminary year commences on the 3rd Thursday of October, and there are three vacations:- The first preceding the 3rd Thursday in October, two weeks. The second, preceding the 4th Thursday in February, four weeks. The third, preceding the 4th Thursday in June, four weeks.

In regard to my religious affairs I can joyfully say that I have embraced the Christian religion and am to become the preacher of the gospel. The practitioners of this Island generally will not give medicine to a patient in unlucky day. When a practitioner is called to a patients house, he looks whether it is lucky or unlucky day or else while he is in the patients house, if he heard the ~~sou~~ chirping of the lezard, he fears to administer medicine. A christian will not do so. He will administer medicine both to his body & soul. I need not dwell more on this point. I am to live & die for christ. I request you my dear Benefactors, to supply me, if you please with such necessaries as are calculated to render me profitable in my present profession.

My parents, 3 elder brothers & an elder sister are preserved till this time by the grace of God. They, with one exception, have not yet tasted the sweetness of the christian religion. One of my elder brother who named Jonathan Spooner educated in the seminary and is now a useful helper to Rev. L. Spaulding at Oodooville. My Tamul name is Vallupully (வல்லுபுள்ளி) which signifies the child of Canda swamy the principal God of this land; and as my name signifies I was before, now I feel it my honor and glory to call myself the child of humble lowly & meek Jesus.

Here we have 3 societies which are Evangelical, Moral, and Bible societies. Those societies are gradually increasing and I hope they will be a great blessing in this superstitious heathen land. I pray always that they might be polished with the golden rules of the Gospel and be cleansed with the Holy Spirit of the True God who is able to make them prosper in their undertakings which are founded upon their belief in him. The attainments of knowledge

ledge and wisdom which I received by you charitable and kind efforts press me to imitate the doings of the apposttes and especially of christ. As you have requested me to write of my district I shall briefly mention in these following lines.

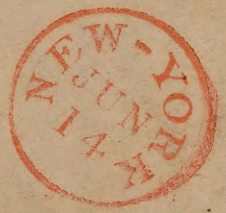
Jaffna is a large & populous province, formerly a kingdom, is situated on a neck of land at the northern extremity of Ceylon directly opposite to Nagapatam & it is seperated from the main & mountainous body of the Island by injecting arms of the sea. It is bounded on the north by the part of the gulf of Bengal, south by an arm of the sea, east by the Bay of Bengal & on the west by the straits of Mannar. Its whole length from northwest to southeast is about 35 miles & its breadth from northeast to southwest varies from 5 to 15 miles. It comprehends an area of 1220 Square miles. Its population seems to be about 146,528 of whom 56,417 are agriculturists. Beside the islands on the west & south western side, It is divided into 4 Districts Waligam, Wadamarachy, Tenmorachy & Patchilapally, which contains 32 parishes; holding 159 villages. The climate affords a good health to Europeans constitutions. Paddy is cultivated in great quantity but it is scarcely enough for the consumption of the inhabitants. the sowing time at Jaffna is in August & September & harvest is in January & February. The cocoanut plantations at Jaffna is not so much as in other parts of the island. However it does not feel any want for cocoanuts from the other parts. The cocoanut leaves twisted into cadjans, serve in various ways to thatch houses & to hide the besprinkling of the rain into the house, &c. And the cocoanut kernal made into scrapings serve for pastries.

Palmyrah trees are in a great abundance in Jaffna - their fruits form a material portion of the food of the inhabitants, while the leaves, serve as thatch for houses, as a substitute for paper & for making mats baskets, &c. & the timber which forms a chief article of trade is used for buildings. At the whole, a most of the Jaffna people cannot support themselves, but with the palmyrah productions, in varies ways.

My dear Benefactors think me always in your public & private devotions; so I do always of you.

I remain your obedient & humble student

Samuel Miller

Samuel was a very fine lad. We hope much of him. but I cannot [illegible] that he has recently married & keeps a wife

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